

Mahathir: Tabloid of 'no use to nation'

KUALA LUMPUR: The permit of *Mingguan Waktu* was revoked because the weekly did not contribute to nation-building, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

The Prime Minister said the tabloid was closed down because its reports were of "no use to the nation."

"I believe that newspapers in the country should play a role to develop the nation.

"Instead, *Mingguan Waktu*'s publishers did not adhere to what they had specified when they applied for the permit things like its mock-up and so on," he said.

He was speaking to newsmen at Su-

bang airport on his return from a 10-day visit to Japan and South Korea.

Dr Mahathir, who is the Home Minister, had ordered the tabloid's permit be revoked before he left for the visit.

Deputy Home Minister Datuk Megat Junid Megat Ayob announced the ban on Wednesday.

Dr Mahathir dismissed allegations that he revoked the paper's permit because it had published an article claiming that he had failed in his job during his 10-year tenure.

Asked for examples on what articles he considered were of no use to the nation, Dr Mahathir said he never read the *Mingguan Waktu*.

His decision was based on reports submitted to him as the Home Minister, he added.

On the opposition's criticisms of the Bill to increase the salaries of ministers and MPs, he said the opposition should not whine about it because there were ministers holding more than one portfolio but only received one salary.

"There are also some ministers who are more than 55 years old and are not getting a pension.

"Ministers are getting far less if compared to (top executives in) the private sector and agencies owned by the Government. This is not taking

into account the perks enjoyed by them," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that nobody thanked the Government when it decided to reduce ministers' salaries by 10 per cent 10 years ago.

Like in the case of ministers, he said, the Government had to raise the salaries of government servants or many of them would leave for the private sector.

The Prime Minister, however, declined to comment on the recent border incident in Perlis and the allegation of malpractices in the Immigration Department, saying he would wait for the reports first.